UTILITY NEWS

Providing safe, reliable, and cost effective electrical, natural gas, water, and wastewater services to the Fremont area

CITY OF FREMONT
NEBRASKA PATHFINDERS

AUGUST 2016

Introducing Community Solar Program

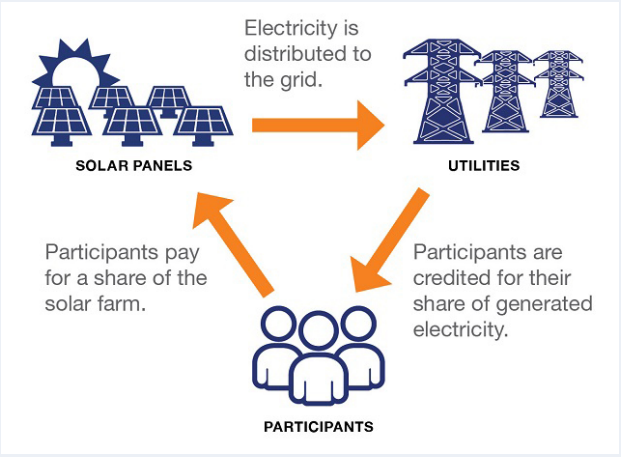
The City of Fremont is in the midst of developing a voluntary community solar program, and we need your help! In order to help us design the program to best match your needs, we are asking for your input via a short 14-question survey. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Paper surveys will be inserted randomly in August utility bills. Customers also may complete a survey electronically by going to this website: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FremontSolar.

Here is a quick explanation for those who are not familiar with a community solar program. It is where a solar farm (an array of solar panels) is collectively owned, and the value of the electricity generated by this solar farm is shared among the participants. A community solar program offers all customers access to solar energy, without installing solar panels on their property. Property owners and renters with utility accounts in their name are eligible to join the solar program. Participants pay a fee for access to solar energy produced by the shared solar farm.

There are primarily two reasons utility customers choose to participate in a community solar program:

- **Individuals support renewable energy, and/or**
- **Individuals want to lock in the price they pay for a portion of their electrical use.**

What is community solar?



1. **Participants voluntarily pay for a share of a solar array (not located on their property).**
2. **Electricity produced flows into the electric grid.**
3. **Participants receive the benefits for electricity produced by their share of the solar farm.**

What are the benefits to participants and Fremont?
Community solar programs offer benefits to both the individual participant of the program and the electric utility. Through participation in a community solar program, individuals gain risk-free solar access as the Utility takes care of project maintenance. With the electric rate for solar energy locked in, participants have long-term energy savings while a portion of their electricity is generated by a clean energy source. The utility benefits by offering all of its customers access to solar energy, reducing Fremont's carbon footprint. The solar energy project potentially will defer costly grid upgrades.

Tell us about your interest in the community solar farm by completing the survey today.

ELECTRIC CREWS TESTING POLES

With approximately 15,000 poles in our service territory, testing wood poles for decay is vital for safety and reliability. All poles are tested on a 15-year testing cycle. This means that Electric Utility personnel are testing poles March through October every year, as weather and schedules permit. In many cases you may see them working on your property in the right of way. They do not knock on doors before entering a property to access the poles, but they are mindful of your pets, latched gates, gardens, landscaping, and other obstructions to the pole lines.

Thank you for your patience while we are working in your neighborhood. This program helps us reduce pole hazards that may arise during storms producing high winds and heavy rains. Fremont has experienced a few of those this year!

Many Devices Use Just as Much Power When Off

Once upon a time, there was a difference between on and off. Now, it's more complicated. Roughly 50 devices and appliances in the typical American household are always drawing power, even when they appear to be off, according to the Department of Energy's Berkeley Lab.

It adds up. About a quarter of all residential energy consumption is used on devices in idle power mode, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. This means that devices that are "off" but in standby or sleep mode can use up to the equivalent of 50 large power plants' worth of electricity and cost more than $19 billion in electricity bills every year.

What can you do to save energy? Plug devices into a power strip that can be switched off when devices are not being used. Making wise energy choices today will help manage your energy budget.

3 Ways to Fight Allergies and Save Energy

It's that time of year. Warmer temperatures and high humidity mean that air conditioning costs are putting the heat on your energy budget. Fortunately, there are three simple solutions that will help you combat both problems.

1. **Change your air filter** A dirty, clogged filter slows the flow of air, causing your cooling system to work harder and use more energy. At the same time, dust and debris trapped in the filter can circulate back into your home, decreasing indoor air quality and exacerbating allergy symptoms.

2. **Maintain your air conditioner.** Your air conditioning system does more than just keep you cool, it helps exhaust pollutants and control humidity levels inside your home. Hire a qualified professional to inspect and clean your air conditioning system annually.

3. **Freshen up your ventilation** A healthy indoor environment requires fresh air. Unfortunately, hot, humid outside air is good for allergens like mold spores, but not so good for your allergy symptoms. Heat recovery ventilators (HRVs) offer a smart way to save energy while controlling humidity levels inside your home. HRVs use the relatively cool air that your air conditioning system is venting outdoors in the summer to cool down hot incoming outdoor air. It's an efficient way to improve your indoor environment without driving up cooling costs.

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Department of Utilities

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